for all the people living below the poverty line, so that they can be paid their dues under the Employment Guarantee Scheme through banks and post offices;

(b) if so, the efforts made in this direction, till date, and the outcome thereof;

(c) whether two per cent commission is being demanded by the post offices for the same; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by Government for its redressal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU) (a) and (b) Payment of wages to the beneficiaries of the NREG Act is to be made by the States. Some States have made tie-up with banks and post offices for payment of wages to the beneficiaries through bank/post office accounts and some other are exploring such possibility.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The matter has been taken up with Department of Posts to waive of the service charge of 2%.

Decrease in the number of villages

†1756. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of villages in the country is decreasing;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the State-wise number of villages decreased;

(c) whether it is a fact that decrease in the number of villages has led to decrease in production of foodgrains; and

(d) if so, remedies before Government to deal with such situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL): (a) to (d) According to the Census Data of the Registrar General of India, in the country, the number of villages including uninhabited were 6,34,321 in the year 1991

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

and 6,38,635 in the year 2001 *i.e.* an increase of 4314 villages. However, correlation between number of villages and production of foodgrains is not established.

Implementation of NREGS in Bundelkhand

1757. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the Districts of Bundelkhand are covered under the NREG Act Scheme;

(b) if so, what is the progress in implementation in this particular area; and

(c) how many job cards were issued in Bundelkhand, as on 28th February, 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) to (c) The districts of Tikamgarh, Satna & Chattarpur of Madhya Pradesh and Jalaun, Lalitpur, Banda, Hamirpur, Mahoba & Chitrakoot of Uttar Pradesh of the Bundelkhand area are covered under NREGA. A Statement indicating status of implementation of NREGA including the number of households issued job cards in the above districts is given below:

Statement

Status of implementation of NREGA

(Rupees in lakhs)

	States/Districts	No. of house hold issued job cards	No. of house hold have demanded wage employment	No. of house hold provided employ-ment	Central fund released	Funds utilized
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Madhya Pradesh						
1	Tikamgarh	215704	154000	124910	11404.59	6814.43